



DECEMBER 2022

Sidewalk Improvement District

Information on the Proposed Legislation and Program
in the City of Hudson

Hudson's sidewalks serve a crucial role for pedestrians seeking to enjoy everything the local community has to offer. As the City's law is currently structured, property owners in Hudson have a responsibility to maintain their sidewalks and repair those that have fallen into disrepair.

In October 2019, the City entered into a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice regarding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) noncompliance identified on a number of municipal properties and programs. This settlement included a mandate to resolve a large portion of noncompliant sidewalks and curb cuts within the City over a three-year period, ending October 2022. In part due to the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the construction sector, it became evident that the City would be unable to effectively and efficiently repair its sidewalks under the current law. The City negotiated an extension of this settlement agreement with the Department of Justice to October 2024, and as a condition for this extension the City has agreed to pursue new legislation that enables the City to make direct repairs to sidewalks adjacent to private property.

Now, the Common Council, Mayor's Office, and Department of Public Works are working together to develop and implement a **Sidewalk Improvement District Program**, inspired by the approach taken by the City of Ithaca and other municipalities across the U.S. to solving this civic problem. By establishing an improvement district with a fair and consistent fee structure that encompasses the entirety of Hudson, the City is able to facilitate better and faster sidewalk and curb cut repairs, plan for the construction of new sidewalks, and treat sidewalks as the shared resource they truly are.

How will the Sidewalk Improvement District Program work?

- Hudson's Sidewalk Improvement District (SID) Program is proposed to encompass the entirety of the City, with the exception of certain properties owned and maintained by the state and school district. The City plans to hire a new qualified staff member to serve as a manager of the program, and establish an **SID Committee** comprised of a mix of City officials and the public to serve as the oversight body for its duration.
- Each lot within the SID map will be subject to an **annual assessment and associated fees**. Tax-exempt properties are included in this annual assessment. Funds raised by these assessments and fees will be used to fund the cost of repairs undertaken by the City and its contractors.
- If you have paid for renovations to your property's sidewalk in the last twenty (20) years, you are eligible for a reduction in SID program fees based on a percentage of the total sum of labor and materials paid for **past work**. The Department of Public Works and the SID Committee will be responsible for evaluating and determining eligibility for fee reduction based on past work.
- The Common Council will approve the **funding and work to be performed** by the SID Program as part of the normal budget process. The SID Committee will recommend a budget and schedule of work to the Council and hold regular meetings throughout the year for progress reports, appeals, and public input.
- Once the formula and assessments are approved by the Council, SID fees will be added to property water/sewer bills administered by the Department of Public Works.

- **Sidewalk curb cuts and accessibility ramps** will be included in district work and funded by district assessments. **Driveway cuts and aprons** will not be included.
- The Local Law expressly preserves the right of the City (via Council, Commission of Public Works, or Planning Board) to require the construction or repair of sidewalk at the cost of the property owner as part of the site plan review process. Such work may not be used to reduce the property's future SID assessments.

How much will this cost me?

The annual fees associated with the SID Program will be calculated with the below formula:

	Annual Maintenance Fee <i>Flat fee.</i>	\$100 for residential properties with up to 3 units \$200 for all other properties <i>Exceptions for sliver and non-developable lots</i>
+	Frontage Fee <i>Calculated based on the length of property that abuts the line of the public street or streets within the Sidewalk Improvement District.</i>	\$30 per 55 foot segment or portion thereof <i>Residential properties (up to 3 units) exempt</i>
+	Square Footage Fee <i>Calculated using the property's building square footage.</i>	\$0.015 per building square foot <i>Residential properties (up to 3 units) exempt</i>
-	Past Work Reduction <i>For sidewalk repair/installation up to 20 years from the date of assessment, maximum \$15 per square foot</i>	1/20 of the sum total cost of past work (labor and materials)

Below are three example SID Program fee bills based on some common property types and situations.

SID Fee Example A Two-family home, no recent sidewalk work		SID Fee Example B 10,000 square foot mixed commercial/residential, no recent sidewalk work	
Annual Maintenance Fee	\$100.00	Annual Maintenance Fee	\$200.00
Frontage Fee	\$0.00	Frontage Fee	\$30.00
Square Footage Fee	\$0.00	Square Footage Fee	\$150.00
Past Work Reduction	(\$0.00)	Past Work Reduction	(\$0.00)
Total annual SID Fee	\$100.00	Total annual SID Fee	\$380.00

SID Fee Example C 15,000 square foot nonprofit, repaired sidewalks 5 years ago	
Annual Maintenance Fee	\$200.00
Frontage Fee	\$60.00
Square Footage Fee	\$225.00
Past Work Reduction	(\$337.50)
Total annual SID Fee	\$147.50

How will the City ensure this work gets done?

Part of the project budget will include the hiring of new managerial staff within the DPW to focus specifically on the execution of the Sidewalk Improvement District Program and work with the rest of the administration and one or more contractors to execute the program's construction. The SID Committee will hold regular public meetings to monitor the status of the program, with reports prepared by the program manager.

Why is the City going the Sidewalk Improvement District route, rather than borrow to pay for these renovations?

If the City took out a bond in order to fund the necessary improvements to our sidewalks, the cost for the debt service on those borrowed funds would be borne exclusively by the City's taxpayers. Using a total project estimate of \$5 million, a bond financed over a 15-year period of this amount would cost taxpayers approximately \$300,000 annually. By funding this work through an Improvement District, *all* property owners would be required to contribute to the ongoing maintenance of this shared amenity, providing a more affordable and equitable cost for all participants.

What else is the City doing to make improvements to sidewalks?

- As part of its Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant, the City is breaking ground soon on Hudson Connects, a project that will make improvements to the streets, sidewalks, and curb ramps for the "BRIDGE District," the western-most quarter of the city between Front Street and Second Street.
- The City receives annual funding from the Department of Transportation to repave parts of our streets. In 2021, this included the installation of over 20 new curb cuts in several locations where street repairs were prioritized.
- Most recently, the Mayor's office has applied for \$5 million in federal assistance to make repairs to sidewalks that connect pedestrians to municipal and county services.
- Renovations to the intersection of Fairview Avenue and Green Street will include improvements for a safer pedestrian experience. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2023.

Contact Us

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